# Our News Snapshot Page

## Men Who Have Been Thanked by Congress

By CHARLES N. LURIE.

THESE are men who have deserved well of the republic. These are men who, having rendered eminent services to their country, have received the highest mark of distinction which it is within the power of the nation to give. Congress, sitting in conclave on the welfare of the land and its people, has thanked these men for their services. No jewel, no star or garter, no golden fleece or bit of silk ribbon goes with this expression of the solemn thanks of millions of people, but its accolade is felt as deeply by its recipient as though his shoulder had been touched by a king's sword. It is a distinction awarded not by a sovereign, but by the representatives of millions of sovereigns. Since the foundation of this republic only twoscore men have been deemed worthy of the honor. The proposition to accord it to Robert E. Peary for his discovery of the north pole revived interest recently in "the thanks of congress."

The honor roll of the men who have received the thanks of congress constitutes a "hall of fame" more exclusive than that embodied in the bronze tablets in the beautiful building in New York. In the latter case the men and women honored have been chosen by votes of scholars and others who decide whom the American people should honor, and their choice is subject to revision by public opinion. In all but a few instances it has been made the subject of criticism. But the honor of the thanks of congress has been conferred by the people themselves, represented in their national assembly. It is the thanks of the assembled populace acting through delegated representatives.

**All but Two Have Been Warriors.**

The distinction of the honor and the high value placed upon it by its donors may be inferred from the smallness of the number of men who have received it. In every case it has been awarded for serving the republic well in military or civil pursuits. Naturally enough, perhaps, as the services rendered in warfare are more conspicuous and appeal to the latent warrior in most of us, military glory gained the coveted vote for the great majority of the recipients. With but two exceptions, besides the case of Peary, the thanks have been rendered to men who have distinguished themselves in one or other of the wars of the nation. The honor carries with it no medals, to be worn outwardly as a mark of distinction, although on several occasions medals were voted with the thanks, but it confers one very highly prized privilege on the recipient. That is the right to the privileges of the floor of the senate and the house of representatives, an honor granted otherwise only to ambassadors and ministers of foreign nations, governors and members of the highest legislative bodies of foreign nations.

Though to only forty men have come the glory of the thanks of congress, to some of them it has come more than once. Two of them stand out preeminent among their fellows as having been thanked three times by the national lawmakers. They are General Zachary Taylor, commander of the army in the war with Mexico and later president of the United States, and Admiral David Dixon Porter, who distinguished himself so greatly in command of Union fleets during the civil war.

The names of two civilians are inscribed on this national roll of honor. One of them is no less a personage than Cornelius Vanderbilt, the first famous financier of the name, who is known also as Commodore Vanderbilt. He saw no naval service, but he served his country well on the water by giving to the Union cause in its hour of need a steamer which had cost him $800,000. For this he received the thanks of congress in a joint resolution passed Jan. 28, 1864. It was a patriotic deed and worthy of the recognition of the nation, but it may be remarked in passing that $800,000 was much more money in 1864 than it is in 1911.

**Thanks of Congress For Sea Rescues.**

The other nonmilitary man who has received the highest mark of national gratitude was Captain B. Gleadell of the steamer Atlantic. In 1874 he was honored by congress for saving the crew of the brigantine Scotland of Portland, Me., during a storm in mid-ocean.

Four presidents of the United States figure on the list. They are Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor and Ulysses S. Grant. Despite his great services to the Union cause, the last named was thanked by congress only once, but it is believed that a second vote would have added its luster to his fame if the death of President Lincoln, following so closely upon the ending of the great war, had not thrown affairs at the national capital into much confusion.

The first of our wars to call forth this expression of the people's gratitude was the "little war" with Tripoli, when Uncle Sam taught the pirates of the Barbary coast that interfering with American commerce was dangerous business. The man thanked was Commodore Edward Preble, the hero of "the most gallant attacks that are recorded in naval history," according to one authority.

Coming down to the war of 1812, the second war with Great Britain, we run across a curious fact. It is well known that in that struggle almost all the honors were won by the navy, the fighting on land redounding very little, if at all, to the credit of American arms. Yet we find no fewer than five army men who served in the war received votes of thanks from congress, while only two navy men were thus distinguished. It seems that army influence must have predominated at Washington in those days when it is observed that Generals Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, Jacob Brown, E. P. Gaines and Alexander Macomb received the thanks of congress, while of their brother warriors on the sea only Captains Oliver Hazard Perry and Thomas Macdonough were thus distinguished. None of America's famous deep sea actions in that war called out the highest mark of honor. Perry received his vote for his work on Lake Erie, while Macdonough received his for his fight against the British on Lake Champlain.

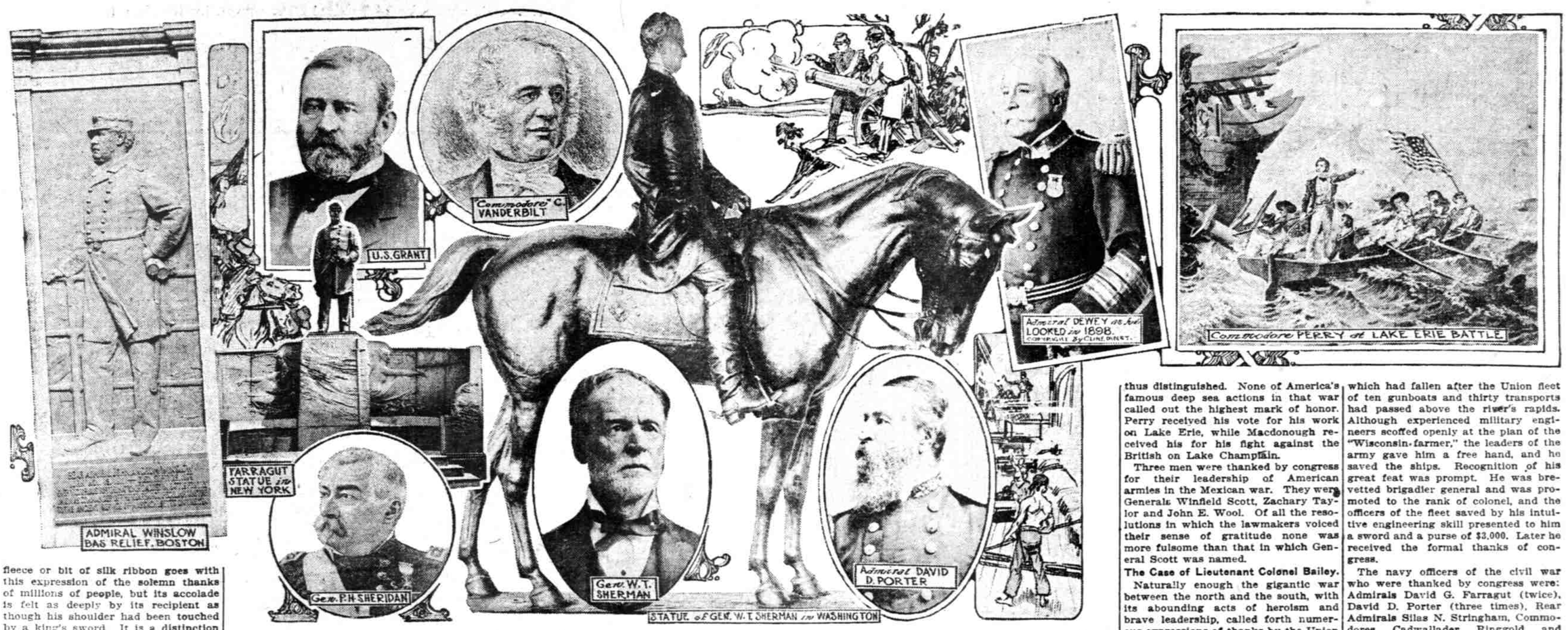
Three men were thanked by congress for their leadership of American armies in the Mexican war. They were Generals Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor and John E. Wool. Of all the resolutions in which the lawmakers voiced their sense of gratitude none was more fulsome than that in which General Scott was named.

**The Case of Lieutenant Colonel Bailey.**

Naturally enough the gigantic war between the north and the south, with its abounding acts of heroism and brave leadership, called forth numerous expressions of thanks by the Union congress. Most of the great commanders of the northern armies received this mark of distinction in addition to the other honors which accrued to them. The list includes twelve major generals and one lieutenant colonel. The generals were Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Thomas, Meade, Hancock, Howard, Burnside, Hooker, Banks, Rosecrans and Lyon. The lieutenant colonel was Joseph Bailey, a well known figure of the civil war period, whose star has been partially eclipsed by others in these latter days. He was a farmer who entered the military service in July, 1861, as captain in the Fourth Wisconsin infantry. He had only a common school education, but in the course of the war he displayed such great engineering ability that he rose to the rank of general and was considered one of the ablest engineers in the Union army, surpassing West Pointers equipped with all the training which that splendid school of engineers could give. In February, 1864, Lieutenant Colonel Bailey had the opportunity to display his skill in "one of the most brilliant feats ever accomplished in military engineering." It was the building of a great dam to control the waters of the Red river, which had fallen after the Union fleet of ten gunboats and thirty transports had passed above the river's rapids. Although experienced military engineers scoffed openly at the plan of the "Wisconsin farmer," the leaders of the army gave him a free hand, and he saved the ships. Recognition of his great feat was prompt. He was brevetted brigadier general and was promoted to the rank of colonel, and the officers of the fleet saved by his intuitive engineering skill presented to him a sword and a purse of $3,000. Later he received the formal thanks of congress.

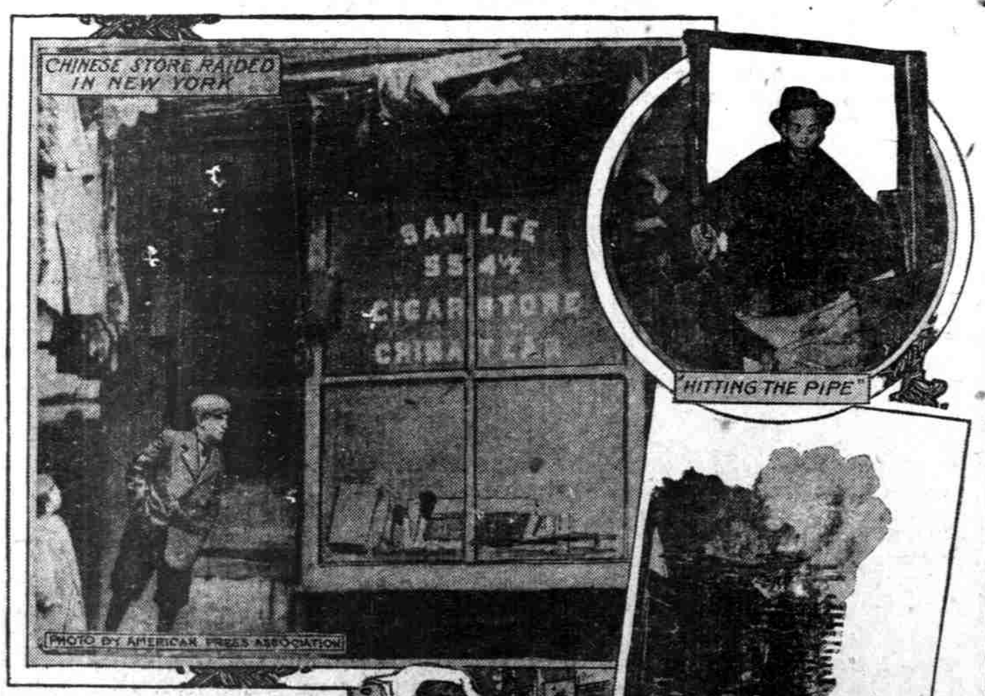
The navy officers of the civil war who were thanked by congress were: Admirals David G. Farragut (twice), David D. Porter (three times), Rear Admirals Silas N. Stringham, Commodores Cadwallader Ringgold and Charles Henry Davis, Captains John A. Winslow, John Rodgers, Stephen C. Rowan, Samuel F. du Pont, Andrew H. Foote (twice), Louis M. Goldsborough, Commander John L. Worden (twice) and Lieutenant William B. Cushing.

Our little brush with Spain, thirteen years ago, called for only one expression of national gratitude in the opinion of congress. That was reserved for Commodore (later Admiral) George Dewey for his services in the war and his victory at Manila. Neither Sampson nor Schley received the thanks of congress, but in a former year Schley figured in connection with this method of reward. It was proposed to thank him formally for his rescue of the Greely party in the arctic, but the vote of thanks was denied.




### America's Exclusive Hall of Fame

## Worldwide War Against "Dope" Traffic Soon to Be Begun





"BANG!" went the raider's ax against the door of a little Chinese store on Seventh avenue, New York, in which opium was sold. The blow marked the firing of another shot in the international war against the illicit drug traffic. In a very real sense the shot may be said to have been one that was "heard round the world." Probably no other proposed international reform is attracting so much attention as the movement against the drug habit.

How important the rulers of nations and the leaders of thought deem this opium question may be gathered from the facts that President Taft recently sent a special message to congress on the subject, his second special message referring to opium and the third reference in the matter in his messages, and from the declaration of the great world missionary conference held in Edinburgh last year against the traffic in the drug. On May 30 this year an international conference for the suppression of the opium evil will be held at The Hague. It was called by President Taft and will be attended by representatives of the nations interested in the matter.

While sufficiently serious in itself in this country and elsewhere, the matter of the opium question is complicated in the United States with considerations of its effect on other forms of crime. Not only are many of our native and imported criminals users of opium and morphine (another form of the drug), but the Chinese who import the drug into this country and sell it here are suspected with good reason of engaging in other forms of criminality. By a law enacted by congress two years ago the importation of opium for other than medicinal purposes is forbidden under heavy penalties. The importers of opium are thus guilty in the first instance of smuggling. In many cases their criminality extends further and includes illicit entry of Chinamen, smuggling of silks and other dutiable goods, bribery of public officials, warfare among themselves, leading to the tong murders, and crimes against white persons, as in the Elsie Sigel case in New York.

But it is in the spreading of the drug habit among our people that the trade in opium works its greatest evil. Recent estimates place the number of users of opium and morphine in this country at 800,000. Lest this be considered excessive the reader should note that in an authoritative encyclopedia article published seven years ago the number was placed at over 1,000,000.

China is generally believed to be the home of opium smoking, but it is asserted that the use of opium and its derivative, morphine, is more general in this country than it is in the Celestial kingdom. The official entries into this country amount annually to 400,000 pounds of crude opium, on which a duty of $1.50 a pound is paid, but this quantity is small compared to the amount smuggled in. Thousands of pounds of opium were seized in the recent raids in New York and other cities.

"Unless an effective check is put on the opium evil it will sap the physical as well as the moral strength of this nation," said recently the head of one of New York's biggest drug importing houses. "In Europe there are 145,000,000 persons. These consume annually only about 30,000 pounds of the drug, while our population of 92,000,000 consumes more than ten times that amount regularly imported, to say nothing of the vast quantity smuggled in."

In the opinion of many physicians, here may be found the explanation of the prevalence in this country of neurasthenia, or nervous breakdown, known in Europe as "the American disease." Some of America's users of opium or morphine take the drug openly in the form of "pills," which are smoked Chinese fashion, or in the form of morphine taken by the mouth or subcutaneously (under the skin). Others take their "dope" in the form of habit forming drugs or beverages. In all cases the ultimate effects are the same—a loss of self respect and ambition and brain power, the formation of disgusting habits, impairment of the moral sense, susceptibility to diseases of various kinds, functional derangements and the suspension of normal functions.

Naturally the amount of money involved in the traffic is the chief stumbling block in the way of reform. So great is it that governments have confessed themselves unable to cope with the trade. For more than a century China's government and people have been striving to free themselves from the opium business, but their efforts have been defeated heretofore by the British defense of the interests of the opium growers of India, whence most of China's opium is derived.

JOSEPH M'INTYRE.

## Impending Fate of the Texas, "Hoodoo" and Hero Ship of the United States Navy

Oh, better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave!
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave.
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!
—O. W. Holmes.

THAT is the way the good folk of Texas feel about the famous battleship named after their state. They do not like the proposition that she be made a target for the war vessels of the Atlantic fleet in order to test the hitting power of the big guns. They prefer to have the Texas assigned to their state as a training ship for the naval militia. They believe that the ship which bore so gallant a part in the famous battle of Santiago should meet with a more glorious end than to sink before friendly guns.

Of course the Texas may not sink when her armor is pierced by the big projectiles. She may survive to be patched up and used again for a target, but some of the Texans feel that that would be simply adding another insult to the vessel. Navy men declare that using the Texas as a target, making her useful to the end, is more commendable a course than letting her rust away to slow but sure dissolution. She has been valueless as a warship for some years, and her place and name are to be taken by a new and splendidly big Texas. The same course is to be followed with the ram Katahdin.

In the history of the old Texas there are two glorious pages on which are inscribed her good work at Santiago and her winning of the gunnery championship of the American battle fleet, but the rest of the record is a dreary story of mishap and failure. Not for nothing is the Texas known in the annals of the "new navy" as the champion hoodoo ship of the universe. More and more varied accidents befell her during her term of activity than have come to the lot of any other warship in American history. From the very start she seemed doomed to be a disappointment to the nation. Years before the battle of Santiago it was said "she cannot be of the least possible service as a man-of-war," a prediction happily disproved in Cuban waters on July 3, 1898, and on many other occasions before and after the battle she met with misfortune.

Even before work was begun on the Texas, way back in 1889, disaster was predicted for the ship because of flaws in her plans. She was called top heavy, shifty and unsteady, and other terms of derision were applied to her. She was one of the first ships constructed in this country when Uncle Sam decided to rebuild his navy, and the critics used her as a horrible example of our inability to build good vessels. Board after board recommended changes in her plans, and it was not until six years after they were approved that she went into commission.

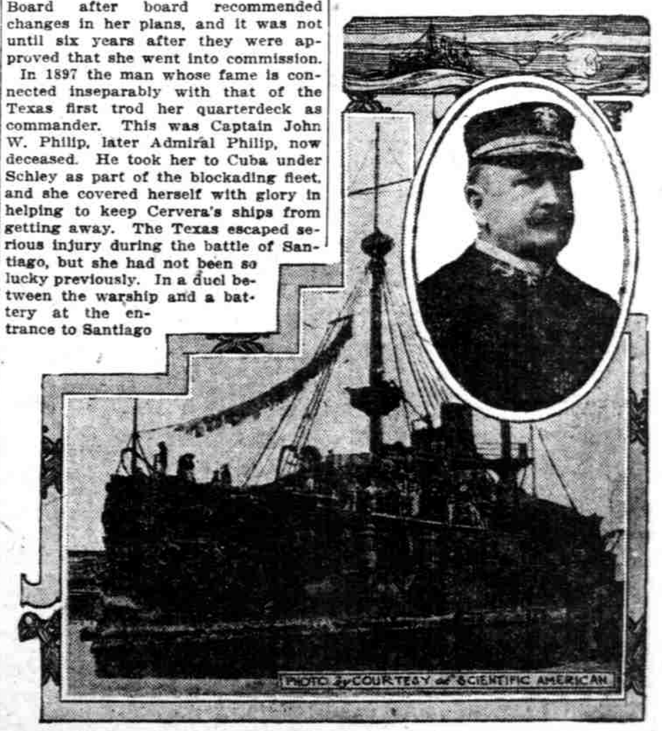
In 1897 the man whose fame is connected inseparably with that of the Texas first trod her quarterdeck as commander. This was Captain John W. Philip, later Admiral Philip, now deceased. He took her to Cuba under Schley as part of the blockading fleet, and she covered herself with glory in helping to keep Cervera's ships from getting away. The Texas escaped serious injury during the battle of Santiago, but she had not been so lucky previously. In a duel between the warship and a battery at the entrance to Santiago harbor weeks before the battle the Texas was struck by a six inch shell which exploded, killing one man and wounding eight others.

After the Texas had passed through the war and had come north to be patched up by the riveters' hammers the hammers of her critics became busy again. They said that some of the most serious damage to the ship had been caused by her own twelve inch guns. The blast of the gases from these big weapons had done more harm to the ship than the shells of the Spanish, said the "knockers." However that may be, the gallant part played by the Texas in the Spanish war did much for her.

It was on the deck of the Texas that one of the most impressive scenes in American history took place. The battle of Santiago had been fought and won; the Spanish ships had been pounded and battered and run ashore after their brave attempt to run the gantlet of the encircling American ships; the waters were dotted with the dead and dying Spaniards, and the remaining men on the vessels of the enemy were running down their flags in acknowledgment of defeat. The men of the Texas saw the red and yellow flutter down and set up a cheer. Then came the words of Captain Jack Philip—brave officer, able commander and humble, devout gentleman:

"Don't cheer, boys; the poor devils are dying."

And the men of the Texas were silent. ARTHUR J. BRINTON.




THE TEXAS AND HER FAMOUS COMMANDER, CAPTAIN (LATER ADMIRAL) JOHN W. PHILIP.